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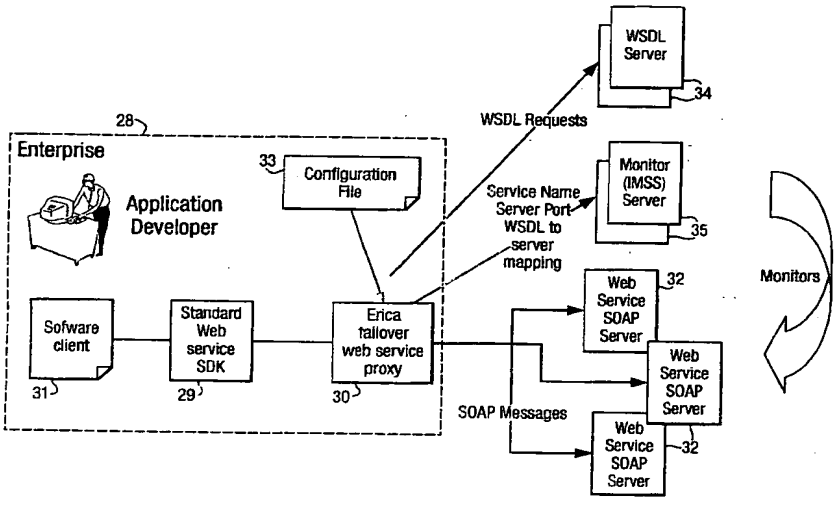
(54) Title: CLIENT SERVER MODEL



(57) Abstract: A client-side intermediary (30) is provided to balance the loading of Web service requests between a plurality of servers (32). The status of the Web service servers (32) is monitored by a monitoring server (35) which provides status updates to the intermediary (30) upon request. The intermediary then uses the information on the status of the servers (32) to decide where to send web service requests. Additionally, the intermediary is able to direct requests for Web service descriptions to the least busy server on the basis of status information. The intermediary (30) substitutes its own identifier for the service name and port in the Web service description before passing it to the client so that all requests are directed through it, thus allowing the continual provision of service for the client even in the event that one of the servers fails.

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